



## Global Campaign News November 8, 2002

Welcome to the biweekly *Global Campaign News*! The *Global Campaign News* is a forum for international exchange on microbicide activities and information with an aim to build a more informed and integrated movement for microbicide development and other prevention options against HIV and STDs.

We welcome your input and contributions. Correspondence can be addressed to [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org). If you would like to unsubscribe to the Global Campaign News, please reply to this e-mail with the subject line: UNSUBSCRIBE.

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### **Community Stakeholders' Meeting on Prevention Options for Women in India**

Over 30 representatives from NGOs working throughout India on issues of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, sexuality and gender met in New Delhi on October 10-11 to discuss prevention methods for women in India. In addition to community stakeholders, representatives from government, research institutions, international and donor agencies, and the private sector attended. Co-organized by the Indian Network of NGOs working on HIV/AIDS (IN-N) and PATH India with funding from the Global Campaign, the meeting laid the foundation for a network of informed community stakeholders to become actively engaged with policy makers, researchers and the private sector to promote research, development, introduction and access to prevention options for women in India.

The meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Prasada Rao, Secretary of Family Welfare and began with a keynote by Mrs. Meenakshi Dutta Ghosh for the National AIDS Control Organization. The opening ceremony was followed by a passionate discussion of HIV and women's status in India, with an emphasis on the gender dynamics that contribute to women's vulnerability. With the reminder that we must not look at technologies in isolation from the culture and people who will use them, the day continued with overviews of female condoms, cervical barriers, and microbicides, focusing on ongoing or potential research in India. Participants and resource people also shared their own experiences in advocating for new methods in other regions, including the work of the Global Campaign.

By the second day of the meeting, participants had developed strategies and key principles reflecting community priorities in advocating for prevention options for women.

These included:

- The need to continue to address power, gender, and equity issues along with efforts to offer new technologies for women's protection
- Involvement of men in reproductive health and safer sex decision-making, and thinking of new methods in the context of couples as well as for women.
- The need for additional means of prevention among all sectors of the population, not just those previously considered "high risk."
- Educating providers today to familiarize them with the methods of tomorrow
- Ensuring that the eventual products will be affordable or free to those who need them
- Involvement of community stakeholders and the NGO community in research, policy and introduction of new prevention methods

As a result of the meeting, several participant organizations have formed a working group to develop the priorities and issues set out at the meeting into an advocacy action plan. The working group will be organized by PATH India and IN-N. Future plans include developing resources materials to raise awareness, contributing to the dialogue of meeting for Indian policy-makers, and building up existing communications networks to raise awareness and accelerate access to HIV prevention options for women in India. For more information contact Megan Gottemoeller, International Programs Coordinator [Mgottemoeller@path-dc.org](mailto:Mgottemoeller@path-dc.org).

### **Top Priority for US Legislative Action Now**

The House and Senate are scheduled to return on November 22, 2002 for a brief "lame duck" session to complete the remaining work of the 107th Congress. The current Congress will adjourn at the end of December and the 108th Congress (including members elected on Nov. 5) will begin in January.

This upcoming Lame Duck session is our last chance of the current Congress to take final action on unfinished business such as HR 2069, "United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2002." This bill contains important provisions to promote microbicide research and development, and authorizes essential programs to fight HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases throughout the world. The legislation represents one of the first times Congress has attempted to comprehensively address the global HIV epidemic.

We must act now to ensure that Members of Congress understand that final action on HR 2069 is an essential priority and that this legislation must be completed before the 107th

Congress finally adjourns. Telephone calls or emails to your own Congress members and other targeted offices will help immensely to let Congress know that the public is watching and concerned. Go to <http://www.global-campaign.org/GlobalAIDSBill.htm> for a sample letter and a list of the targeted offices.

### **Update on Nonoxynol-9 and Materials for Public Education**

Efforts continue to urge manufacturers to discontinue the practice of adding N-9 to sexual lubricants and condoms. To date, all the major lubricant manufacturers have voluntarily agreed to stop adding N-9 to their products. Several condom manufacturers also responded by stopping production of condoms with N-9. Among these are: Planned Parenthood, Johnson & Johnson's condom-producing subsidiary in Brazil and Mayer Laboratories--distributor of Maxx and Kimono condoms.

Unfortunately, the top three condom manufacturers—Ansell Ltd., maker of Lifestyles condoms; Church & Dwight Company, maker of Trojan; and SSL International PLC, the parent company of Durex—have resisted. Additional public education is needed to generate a broad-based consumer demand for removal of these risky products from retail shelves.

To help generate this pressure, Field Organizer Anna Forbes wrote a newsletter article on N-9 now available at [www.global-campaign.org/n-9call.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/n-9call.htm). This article recently appeared on PositiveWords.com. We encourage you to download this piece, reprint it in your organizational newsletter, distribute it to your constituents, circulate it in your community and/or use it as an educational handout at speaking engagements.

### **Congratulations to Biosyn, Inc., Receives \$10 Million Grant from NIH**

Biosyn, Inc., a woman-owned and managed company, recently received a \$10 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to develop Cyanovrin-N (CV-N), a natural compound derived from algae as a possible microbicide. To date, *in vitro* and primate model studies have shown CV-N to be a fusion inhibitor, blocking HIV from binding to target cells.

This five-year grant will be used to advance CV-N through pre-clinical development and then through safety and efficacy clinical trials.

Biosyn is also the developer of Savvy, another potential microbicide entering into Phase III clinical trials in 2003. Biosyn is one of the few companies that are pursuing two or more microbicidal candidates at the same time. Advocates have longed emphasized the need to pursue many different product leads at once in order to increase the likelihood that one will prove effective.

Biosyn's CEO, Anne-Marie Corner, has been a long time, leading advocate for microbicides and started her Biosyn for microbicide development in 1990. She was

featured in the Vogue article on microbicides: <http://www.global-campaign.org/vogue.htm>.

### **Bush Administration Threatens to Withdraw Support from Cairo Plan of Action**

At a recent UN Meeting in Bangkok the Bush Administration threatened to withdraw support of the Cairo Plan of Action, a key international agreement among 179 nations to improve the lives of women worldwide. The Plan of Action urges countries to make health care widely available, reduce maternal mortality, provide universal access to primary education and reduce the spread of AIDS and STDS. In addition, it includes explicit language supporting the need for research into woman-controlled prevention methods such as microbicides.

State Department representatives say that the Bush administration is opposed to the agreement's use of terms such as "reproductive health" and "reproductive services" because they imply a right to abortion. Last July, the administration also withheld \$34 million in assistance to the UN Population Fund on the grounds that its program promoted abortion. Instead, the administration is pursuing a new international campaign that promotes abstinence, particularly among adolescents.

### **New Materials on Website: Microbicide Presentations with Script**

The Campaign has recently added "standardized" microbicides presentations to the Download Center of the website, [www.global-campaign.org/download.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/download.htm). Microbicides advocates can use these presentations as a guide to make it easier to offer workshops, trainings and briefings in their own communities. These Powerpoint presentations also have "ready-made" scripts that you can adapt and change as needed. To access the scripts you must save the presentation onto your computer, open them through the PowerPoint program, and click view to choose notes page.

Currently available are: a long generic presentation; an abbreviated generic presentation; a presentation on Nonoxynol-9; and a presentation on rectal microbicide development. We'd also like your feedback. Please let us know what works, what doesn't and what's missing. All comments should be forwarded to Anna Forbes at [forbes@critpath.org](mailto:forbes@critpath.org).